ABC
HIEROGLYPHICS

Written & drawn

by

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Above : Nekhbet - the Symbol of Upper Egypt

First edition
Published by Amr Hussein Abdel Aal
Printed in Egypt
Deposit No: 9717/2003 : رقم الإيداع
Reprint 2001-2003

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INTRODUCTION

The history will always remember the fact that the ancient Egyptian was the first to utilize the writing in the whole world. Consequently, he was able to register this magnificent human legacy and to make this civilization, on the banks of the great Nile river, an eternal one.

The word Hieroglyphics goes back to a Greek origin composed of two parts (HIEROS) which means sacred, and the word (GLUPHE) which means inscription or engravement, and therefore, it means as a whole the sacred inscription. Egyptologists were not able to specify accurately the date of the beginning of the utilization of writing by the ancient Egyptian, although they have all agreed that the writing started to appear before the beginning of the reign of the first dynasty, i.e. at a date before 3200 B.C.

The ancient Egyptian was very interested in language and writing, and was changing and developing them every now and then, in order to facilitate his daily dealings. Therefore the ancient Egyptian language was developed especially in its figures through the old ages, and the Hieroglyphics was still used in writing especially in inscriptions on the walls of temples and tombs and in recording the religious inscriptions. However, at an early age during the first dynasties in the Egyptian history, a new type of quick writing appeared and was called HIERATIC, it is a short form of the Hieroglyphics to suit the quick writing especially on papyrus.The two writings continued to be used together, each having its own use till the popular or the DEMOTIC writing appeared. The later is more reducing of figures. This was at about the end of the seventh century B.C.

The Hieroglyphics remained completely not understood, till Rosetta stone was discovered in 1799. This stone is a memorial made of basalt and was found incomplete. Its dimensions now are 114 cm length, 72 cm width, where a decree from head priests, was engraved at the occasion of the first annual celebration of the coronation of king ptolemy V - EPIPHANES - as king of Egypt in 196 B.C. This decree was inscribed in three languages, the Hieroglyphic, the Demotic and the Greek languages. Consequently Egyptologists guided by Champolion studied it and used the Greek language as a key to solve the mystery of this language.

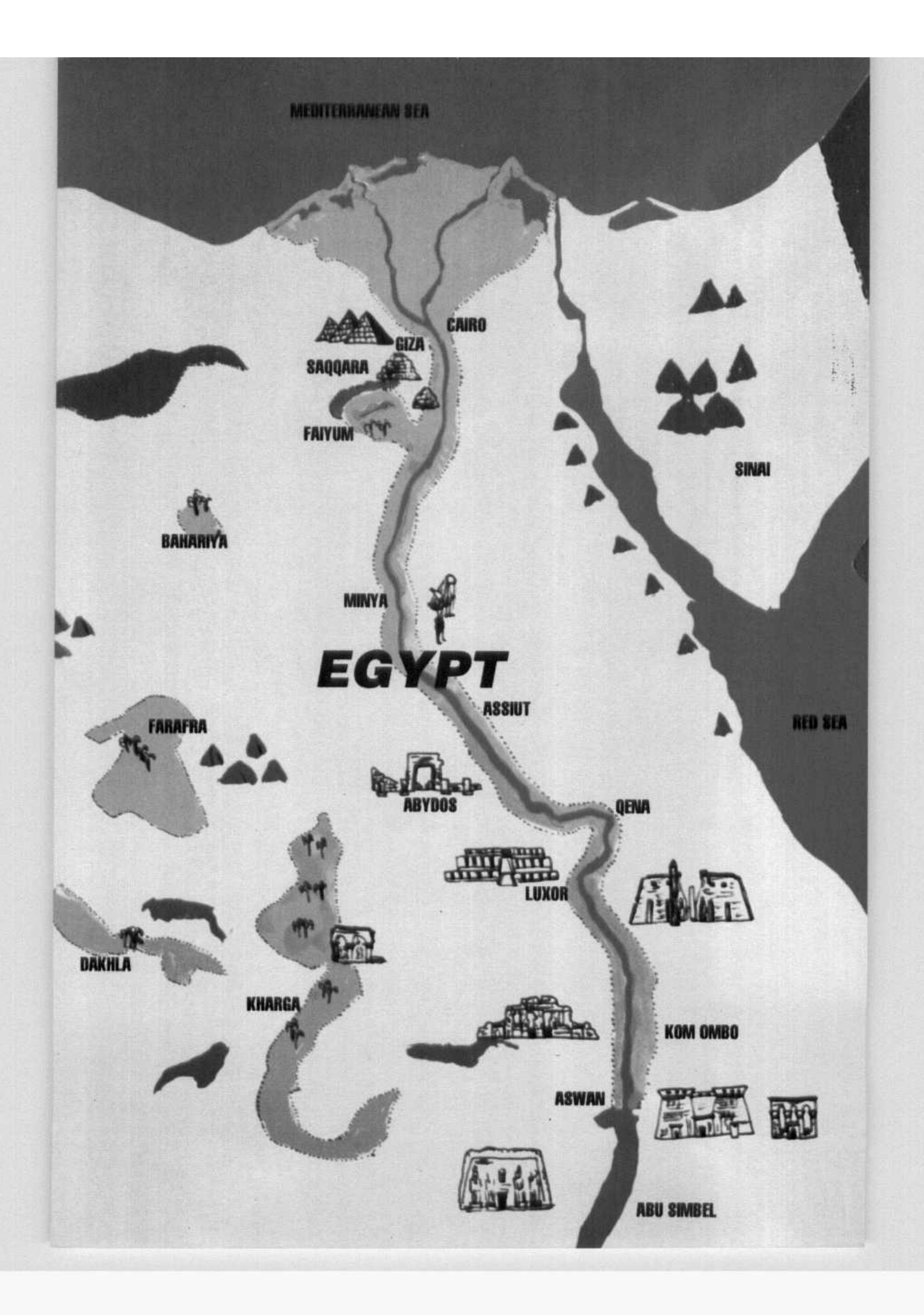
The Hieroglyphics is a language full of various figures and symbols, although it had at its origin, as is the case with all known languages, a specified alphabet constituted of 24 letters. However, this alphabet was not completely responsible for constituting words, since the Hieroglyphics was full of several symbols having sound pronunciation that may join the alphabet or become independent by themselves to constitute the word, besides there were several determinatives that were added to the words to determine their meanings.

Due to the variety of figures and symbols, the ancient Egyptian ignored the vowels and only wrote the original letters in the word. Nevertheless this did not affect our knowledge of the right meaning of the words, but it affected the method of pronunciation in the way that it was pronounced correctly at that time.

Maybe the richness of Hieroglyphics by all these figures was the factor that gave it this charming shine, especially since the ancient Egyptian was very clever in demonstrating these figures whether by inscription or by writing using an artistic sense.

If we regard this language artistically, as drawings and figures, or scientifically, to the meanings and significances it represents, we cannot but respect the ancient Egyptian who brought out this great language.




MEDITERRANEAN SEA
CAIRO
GIZA
SAQQARA
FAIYUM
SINAI
BAHARIYA
MINYA
EGYPT
ASSIUT
FARAFRA
RED SEA
ABYDOS
QENA
LUXOR
DAKHLA
KHARGA
KOM OMBO
ASWAN
ABU SIMBEL

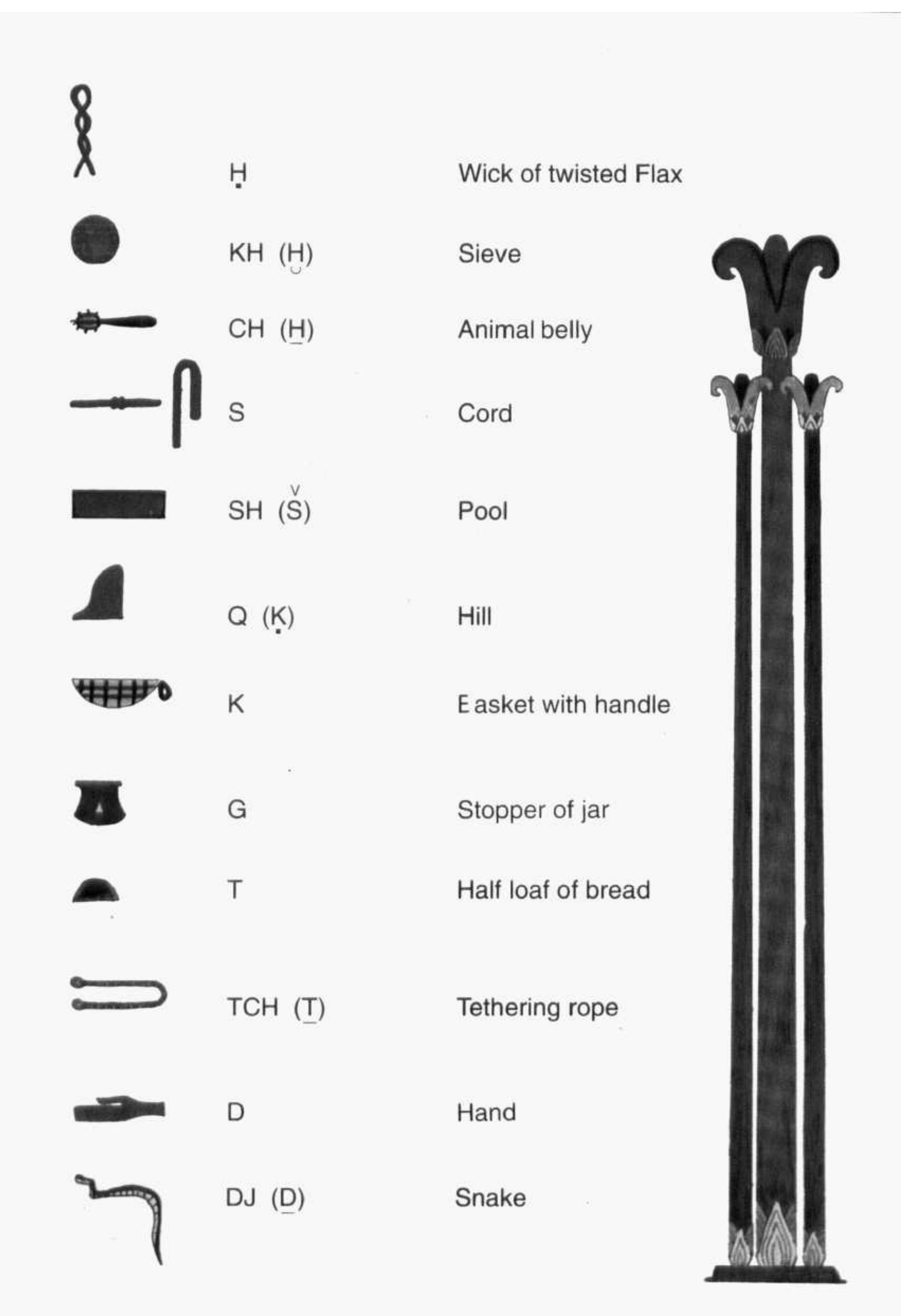
THE ALPHABET

The Hieroglyphic alphabet consists of 24 letters as follows :



	A (ꜣ)	Vulture
	I	Flowering reed
	Y	Two reed - flowers
	Ā (ʿ)	Forearm
	W	Quail chick
	B	Leg or Foot
	P	Stool
	F	Horned viper
	M	Owl
	N	Water
	R	Mouth
	H	Reed shelter





	Ḥ	Wick of twisted Flax
	KH (Ḫ)	Sieve
	CH (H̱)	Animal belly
	S	Cord
	SH (Š)	Pool
	Q (Ḳ)	Hill
	K	Basket with handle
	G	Stopper of jar
	T	Half loaf of bread
	TCH (Ṯ)	Tethering rope
	D	Hand
	DJ (Ḏ)	Snake

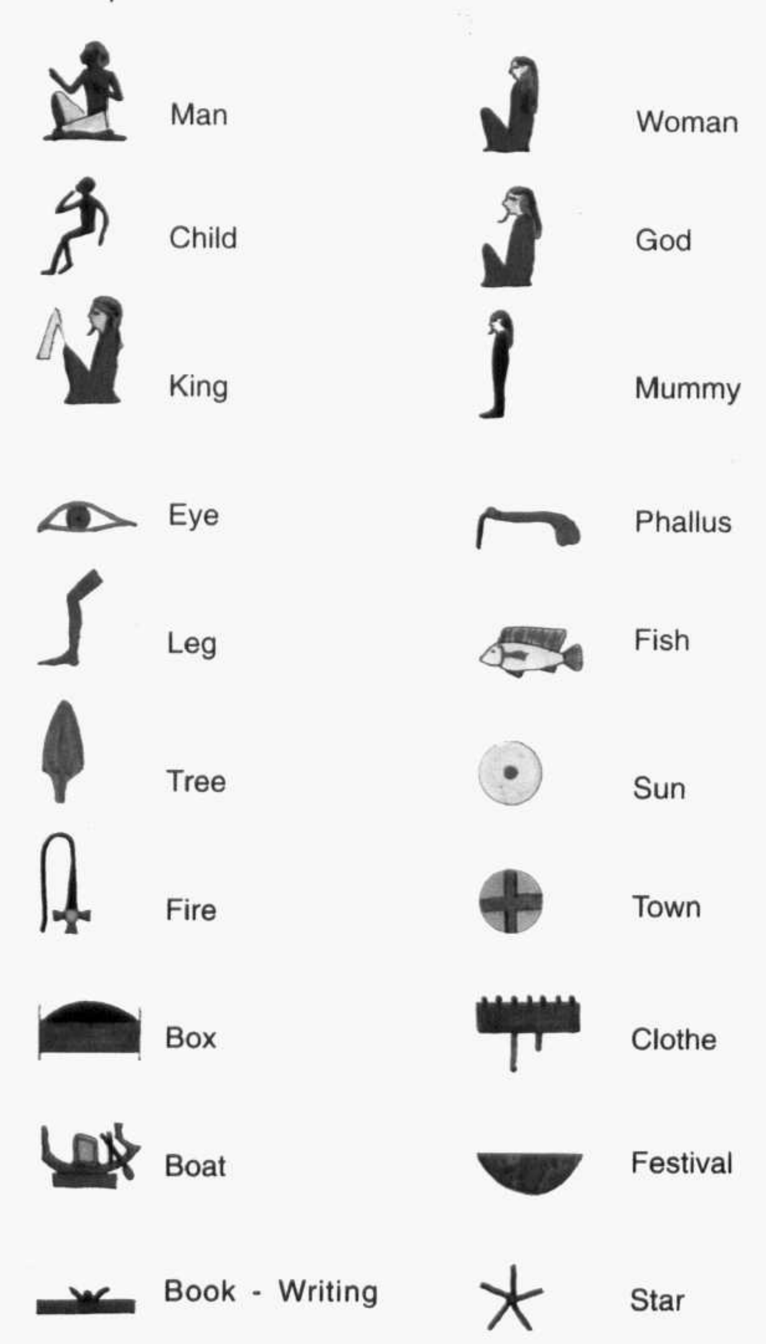
In addition we have

	L	Lion
	N	Crown
	M	Two ribs
	W	Coil of rope
	T	Pestle
	Z	Arm
	O	Lasso



DETERMINATIVES

As previously mentioned, the Hieroglyphic language contains determinatives, which help define the meaning of a word and is symbolic, for example :



NUMERALS

The ancient Egyptians used some symbols as numbers

1

= 1000



= 100,000

10

100

= 10,000



= 1,000,000

Example

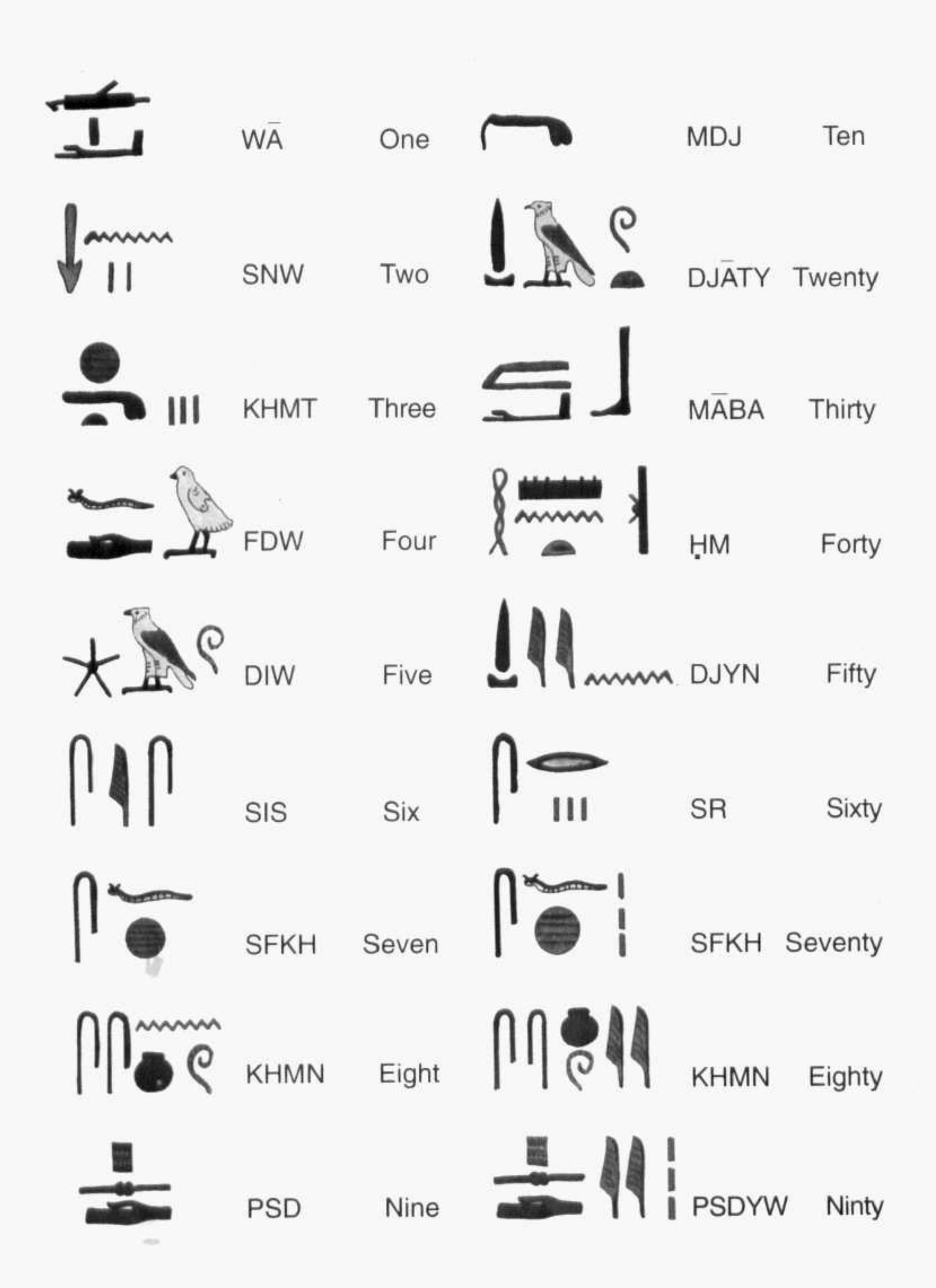
= 4

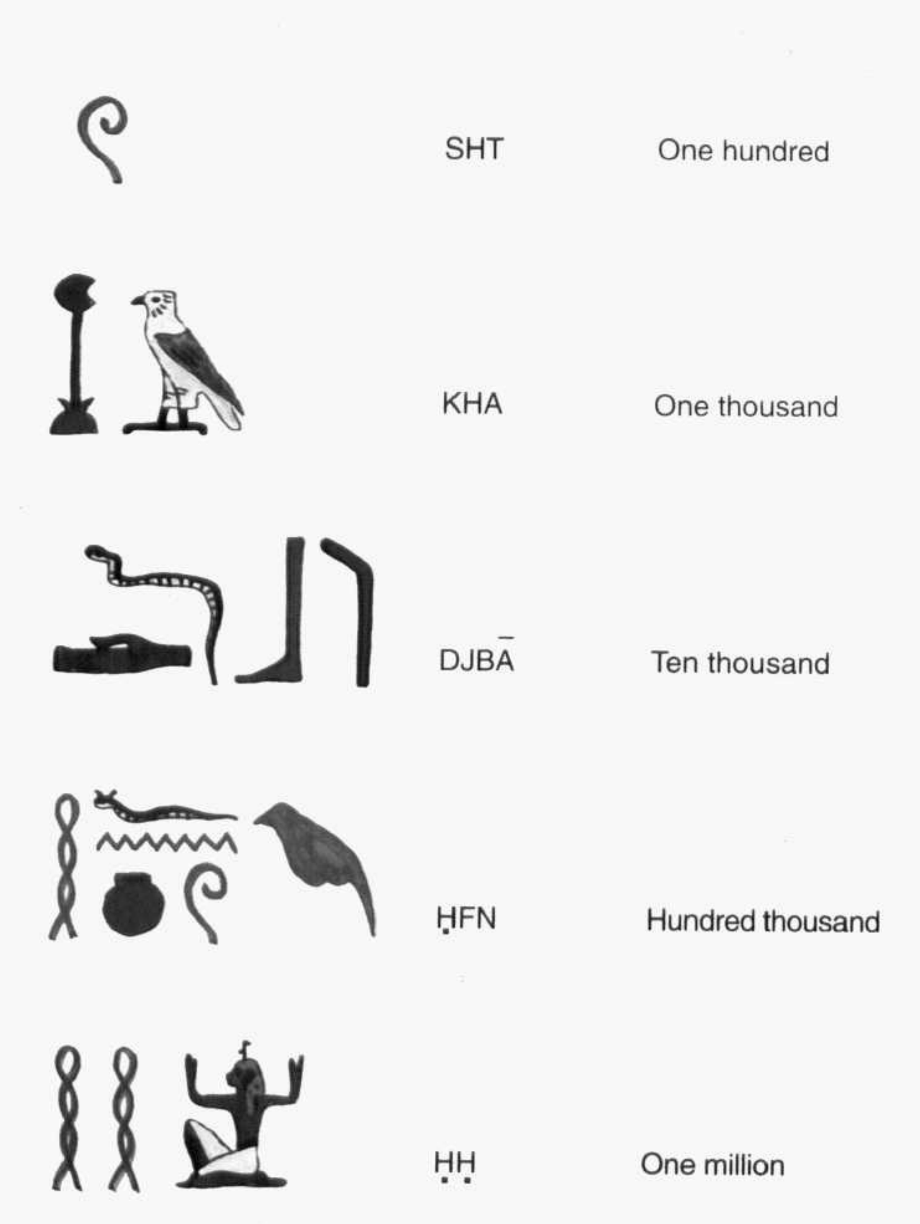
= 30

= 200

= 1833

Written numbers





SHT	One hundred
KHA	One thousand
DJBĀ	Ten thousand
ḤFN	Hundred thousand
ḤḤ	One million

THE CROWNS



ḤDJT
The white crown
of Upper Egypt



KHPRSH
The blue crown



DSHRT
The red crown
of lower Egypt



ATF
Atef crown



SKHMTY
The double crown



NMS
Nemes headdress

TITLES

NSW BIT

King of lower and upper Egypt



SA RĀ

Son of RA



DI ĀNKH DJT

Give life forever



DI ĀNKH MI RĀ

Give life like RA



NSW NB TAWY

King and lord of two lands



PR ĀA

Great house



NTR NFR

Good God



ḤM . F

His majesty



NB KHĀW

Lord of the crowns



ĀNKH DJT

Living forever



MĀ KHRW

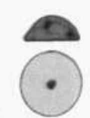
True voice



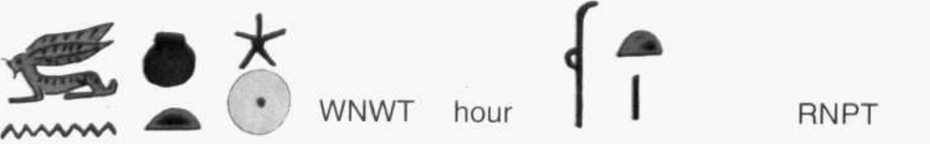
NB NSWT TAWY

Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands.

TIME


 ḤAT second
  HRW day


 AT minute
ABD month


 WNWT hour
 RNPT year

SEASONS

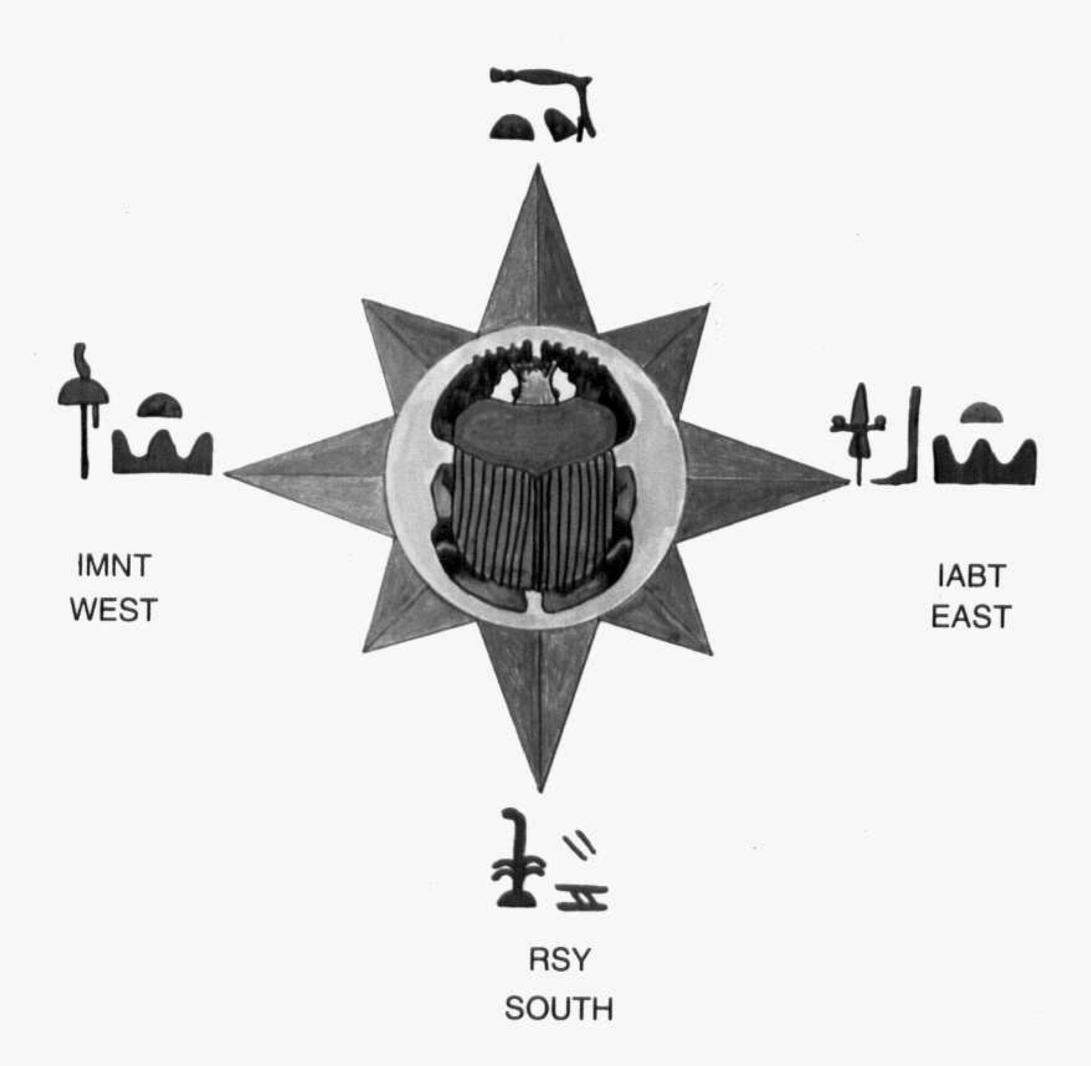
  SHMW summer

  PRT winter

  AKHT inundation

DIRECTION SOURCES

NORTH
MḤT

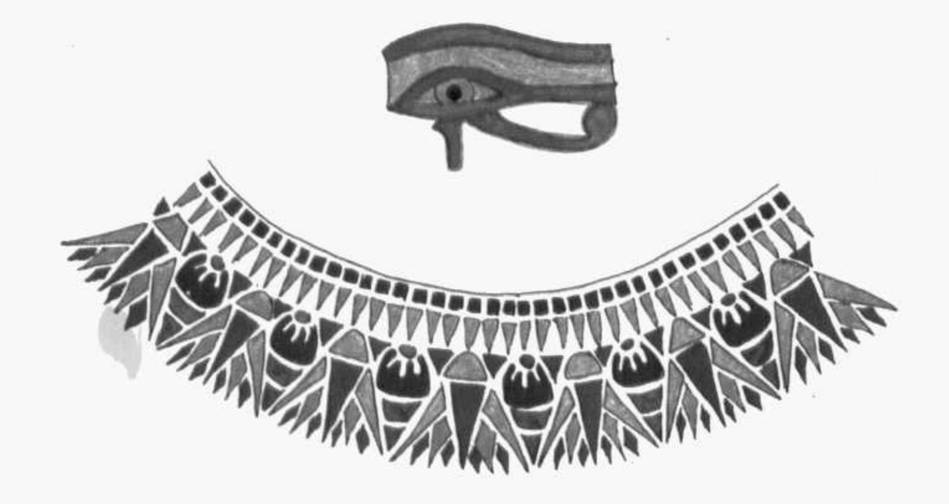


JEWELLERY

	KHSBD	Lapis lazuli
	MFKT	Turquoise
	NBW	Gold
	ḤDJ	Silver
	ĀĀW	Ring
	WSKH	Collar
	NBYT	Collar
	MNIT	Bead - necklace

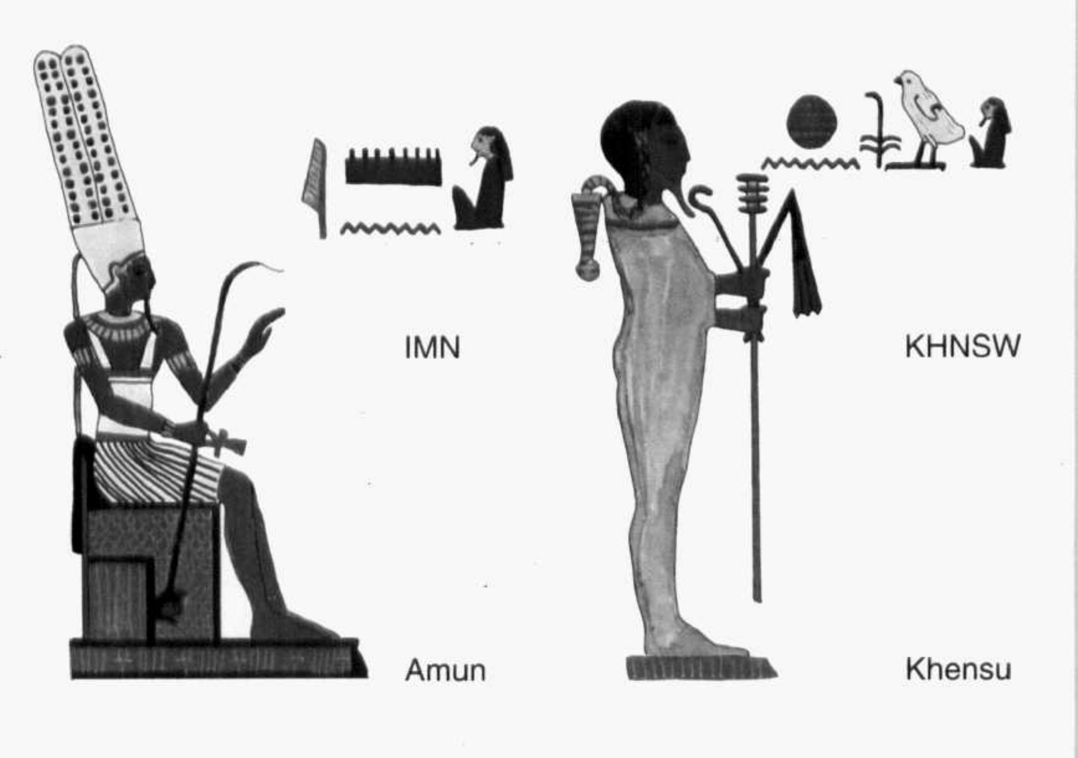


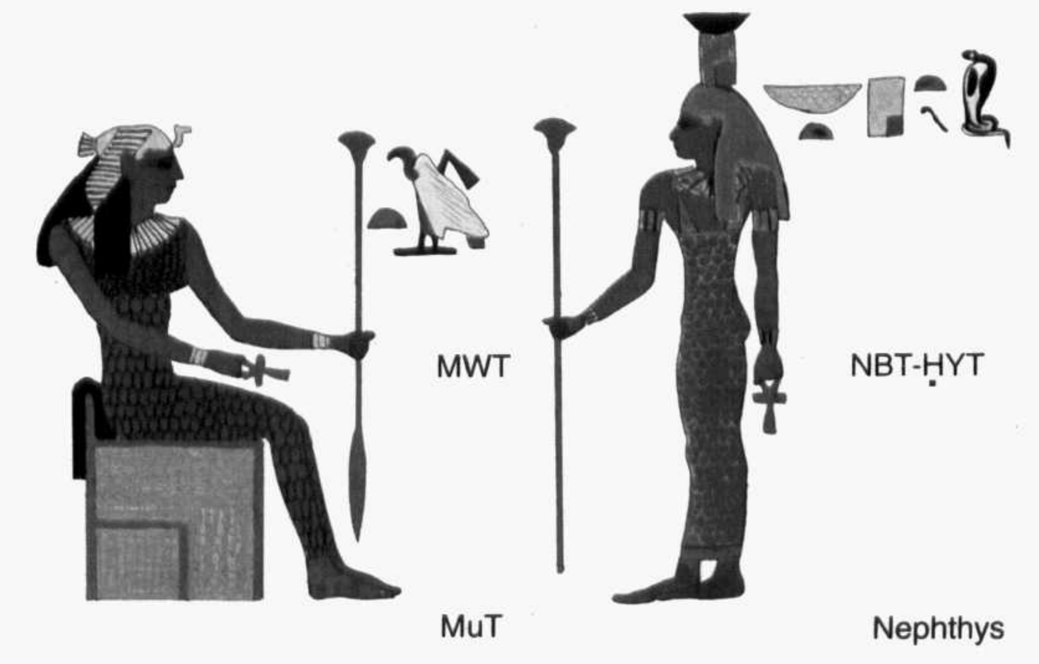




Some Egyptian Jewellery

SOME GODS AND GODDESSES







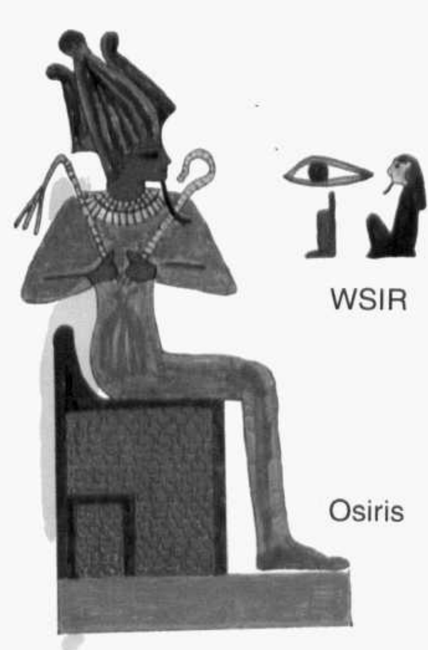
ḤR

Horus



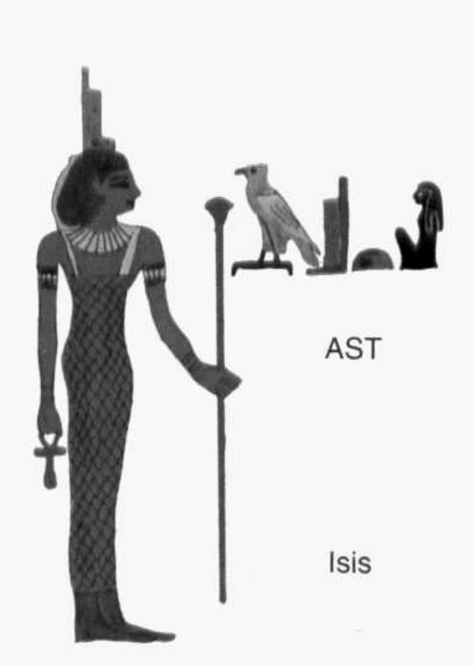
TḤWT

Thoth



WSIR

Osiris



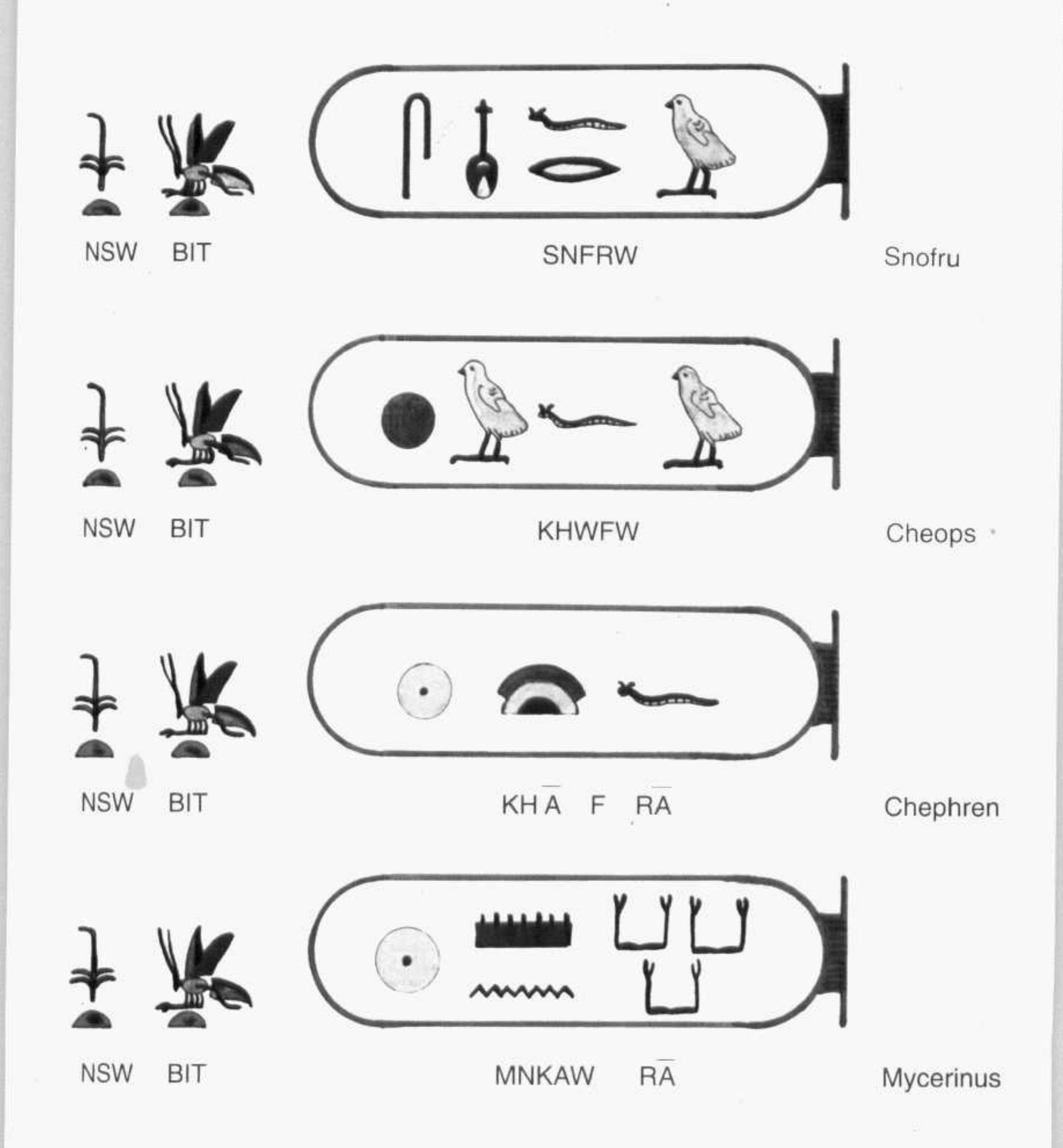
AST

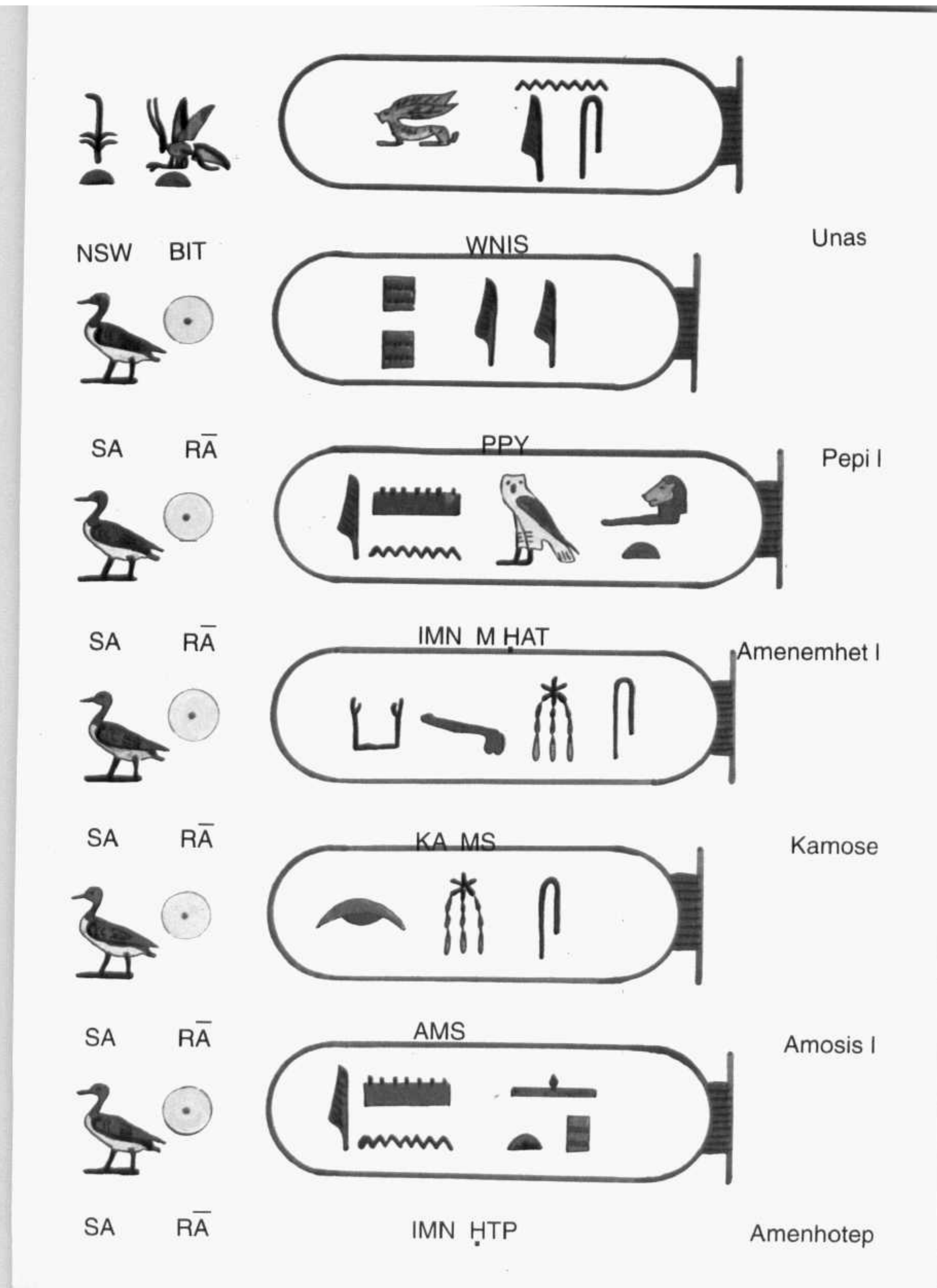
Isis

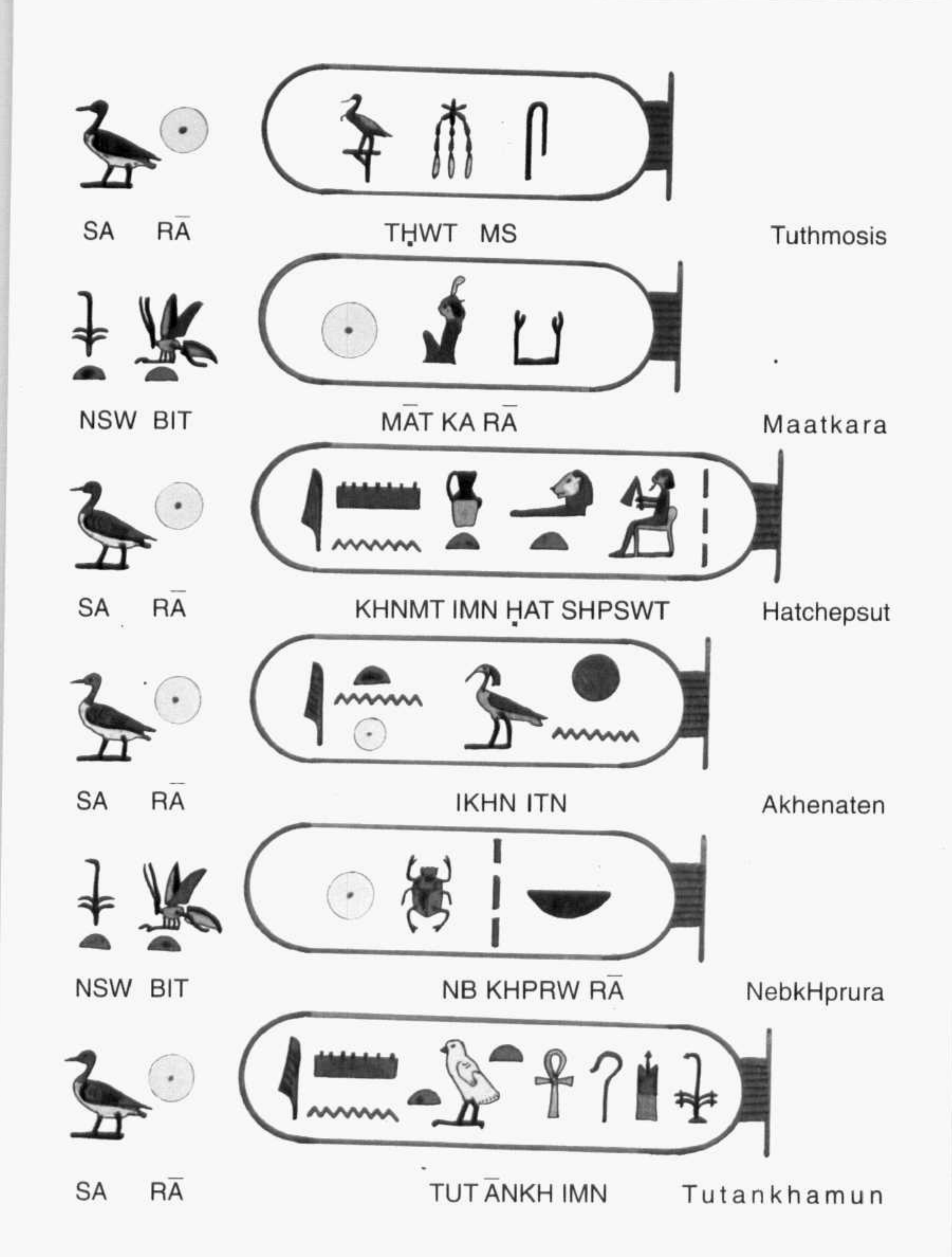

ḤT ḤR
Hathor
INPW
Anubis
STCH
Seth
CHNMW
Khnum

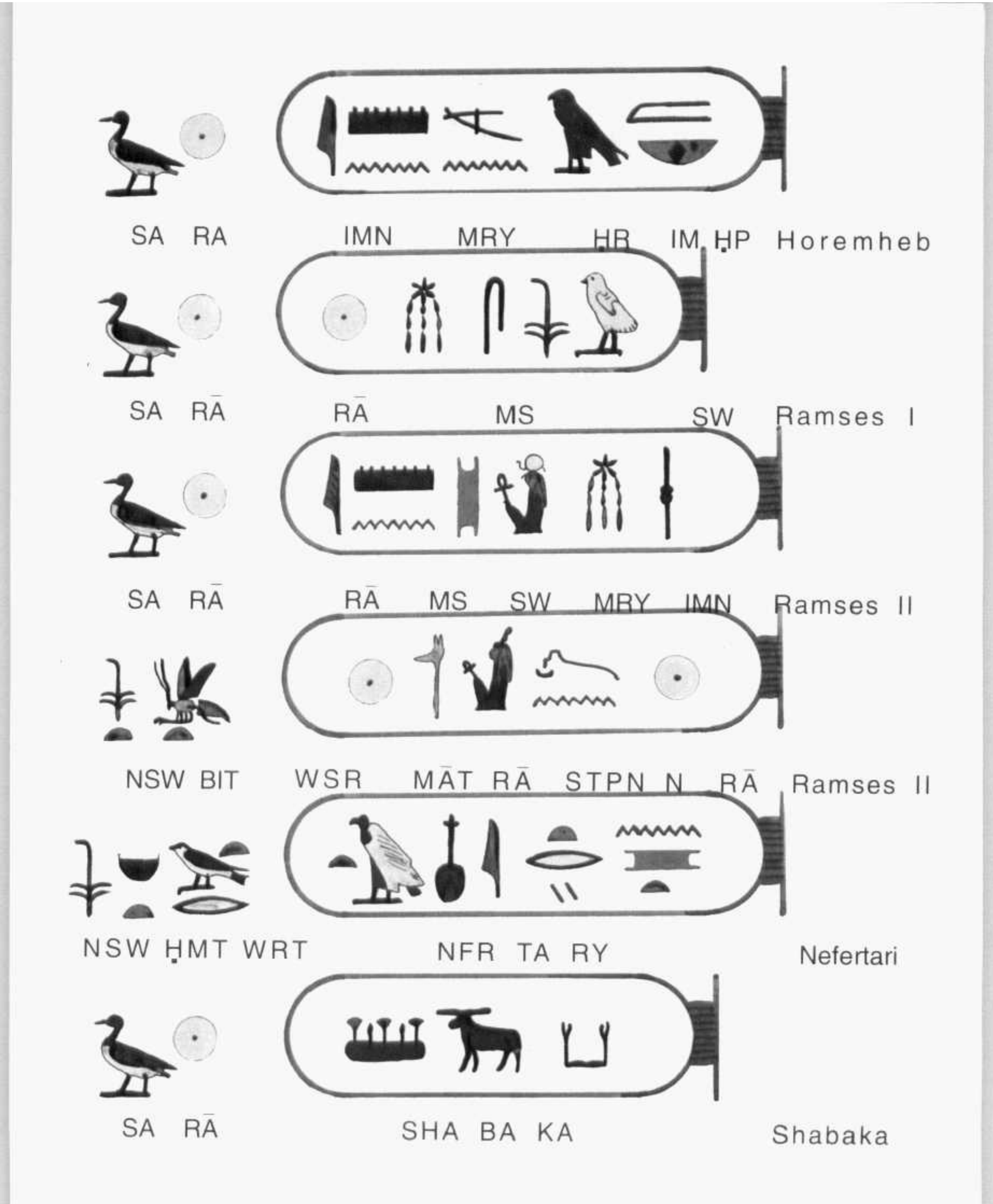
CARTOUCHES

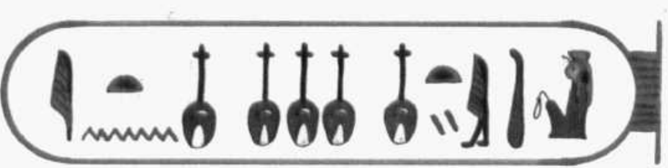
Some of the names of the famous Ancient Egyptian Kings and Queens



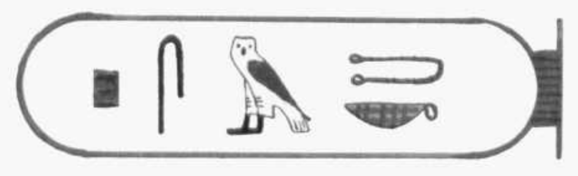

NSW BIT
WNIS
Unas
SA RĀ
PPY
Pepi I
SA RĀ
IMN M ḤAT
Amenemhet I
SA RĀ
KA MS
Kamose
SA RĀ
AMS
Amosis I
SA RĀ
IMN ḤTP
Amenhotep


SA RĀ
TḤWT MS
Tuthmosis
NSW BIT
MĀT KA RĀ
Maatkara
SA RĀ
KHNMT IMN ḤAT SHPSWT
Hatchepsut
SA RĀ
IKHN ITN
Akhenaten
NSW BIT
NB KHPRW RĀ
NebkHprura
SA RĀ
TUT ĀNKH IMN
Tutankhamun

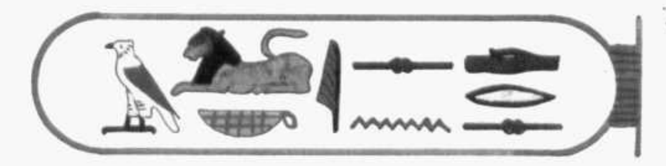

SA RA
IMN MRY ḤR IM ḤP
Horemheb
SA RĀ
RĀ MS SW
Ramses I
SA RĀ
RĀ MS SW MRY IMN
Ramses II
NSW BIT
WSR MĀT RĀ STPN N RĀ
Ramses II
NSW ḤMT WRT
NFR TA RY
Nefertari
SA RĀ
SHA BA KA
Shabaka

NSW ḤMT WRT NFR NFRW ITN NFR TI TI Nefertiti

SA RĀ PS M TCHK Pesmthek

SA RĀ ALKISNDRS Alexander the great

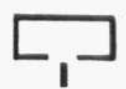
 

SA RĀ PTOLMYS Ptolemy

NB TAWY QLIOPADRA Cleopatra

SOME EGYPTIAN WORDS



PR
House

NW
Time



RM
Fish



HY
Husband



KA
Bull




MRI
Love



WI
Mummy

KHT
Fire



SHN
Tree



RN
Name



MIW
Cat



IW
Dog



PT
Sky

NFR
Beautiful



MWT
Mother



SBA
Star

MW
Water



BNT
Harp



SHFDW
Papyrus roll



PA
Fly



S
Man



DPT
Ship



ST
Woman



NIWT
Village



SHRI
Child



MR
Pyramid



RD
Foot



IRT
Eye

THE HIERATIC ALPHABET

A

I

Y

Ā

W

B

P

F

M

N

R

H

Ḥ

KH

CH

S

SH

Q

K

G

T

TCH

D

DJ

THE DEMOTIC ALPHABET

A

I

Y

Ā

W

B

P

F

M

N

R

H

Ḥ

KH

CH

S

SH

Q

K

G

T

TCH

D

DJ

THE COPTIC ALPHABET

ⲁ	A
ⲃ	B,V
ⲅ	G
ⲇ	D
ⲉ	E
ⲍ	Z
ⲏ	E
ⲑ	TH
ⲓ	Y,I
ⲕ	K
ⲗ	L
ⲙ	M
ⲛ	N
ⲝ	KS
ⲟ	O
ⲡ	P
ⲣ	R
ⲥ	S
ⲧ	T
ⲩ	W,V(U)
ⲫ	PH
ⲭ	KH
ⲯ	PS
ⲱ	O
ϣ	SH
ϥ	F
ϧ	KH
ϩ	H
ϫ	J
ϭ	SH
ϯ	TI





ROSETTA STONE

A black basalt stone now housed in the British museum it contained three sections of different scripts : Hieroglyphic at the top, Demotic in the middle, Greek at the bottom.

Translation of the Greek text of the Rosetta stone

1. In the reign of the young one who has succeeded his father in the kingship, lord of diadems, most glorious, who has established Egypt and is pious.

2. towards the gods, triumphant over his enemies, who has restored the civilised life of men, lord of the Thirty Years Festivals, even as Hephaistos the Great, a king like the Sun,

3. great king of the Upper and Lower countries; offspring of the Gods Philopatores, one whom Hephaistos has approved, to whom the Sun has given victory, the living image of Zeus, son of the Sun, PTOLEMY,

4. LIVING FOR EVER, BELOVED OF PTAH, in the ninth year, when Aetos son of Aetos was priest of Alexander, and the Gods Soteres, and the Gods Adelphoi, and the Gods Euergetai, and the Gods Philopatores and

5. the Gods Epiphanes Eucharistos; Pyrrha daughter of Philinos being Athlophoros of Berenike Euergetis; Areia daughter of Diogenes being Kanephoros of Arsinoe Philadelphos; Irene

6. daughter of Ptolemy being Priestess of Arsinoe Philopator; the fourth of the month of Xandikos, according to the Egyptians the 18^{th} Mekhir.
DECREE. There being assembled the Chief Priests and Prophets and those who enter the inner shrine for the robing of the

7. gods, and the Fan-bearers and the Sacred Scribes and all the other priests from the temples throughout the land who have come to meet the king at Memphis, for the feast of the assumption

8. by PTOLEMY, THE EVER-LIVING, THE BELOVED OF PTAH, THE GOD EPIPHANES EUCHARISTOS, of the kingship in which he succeeded his father, they being assembled in the temple in Memphis on this day declared:

9. Whereas king PTOLEMY, THE EVER-LIVING, THE BELOVED OF PTAH, THE GOD EPIPHANES EUCHARISTOS, the son of King Ptolemy and Queen Arsinoe, the Gods Philopatores, has been a benefactor both to the temples and

10. to those who dwell in them, as well as all those who are his subjects, being a god sprung from a god and goddess (like Horus the son of Isis and Osiris, who avenged his father Osiris) (and) being benevolently disposed towards

11. the gods, has dedicated to the temples revenues in money and corn and has undertaken much outlay to bring Egypt into prosperity, and to establish the temples,

12. and has been generous with all his own means; and of the revenues and taxes levied in Egypt some he has wholly remitted and others has lightened, in order that the people and all the others might be

13. in prosperity during his reign; and whereas he has remitted the debts to the crown being many in number which they in Egypt and in the rest of the kingdom owed; and whereas those who were

14. in prison and those who were under accusation for a long time, he has freed of the charges against them; and whereas he has directed that the gods shall continue to enjoy the revenues of the temples and the yearly allowances given to them, both of

15. corn and money, likewise also the revenue assigned to the gods form vine land and form gardens and the other properties which belonged to the gods in his father´s time;

16. and whereas he directed also, with regard to the priests, that they should pay no more as the tax for admission to the priesthood than what was appointed them throughout his father´s reign and until the first year of his own reign; and has relieved the members of the

17. priestly orders from the yearly journey to Alexanderia; and whereas he has directed that impressment for the navy shall no longer be employed; and of the tax on byssus cloth paid by the temple to the crown he

18. has remitted two-thirds; and whatever things were neglected in former times he has restored to their proper condition, having a care how the traditional duties shall be fittingly paid to the gods;

19. and likewise has apportioned justice to all, like Hermes the great and great; and has ordained that those who return of the warrior class, and of others who were unfavourably

20. disposed in the days of the disturbances, should, on their return be allowed to occupy their old possessions; and whereas he provided that cavalry and infantry forces and ships should be sent out against those who invaded

21. Egypt by sea and by land, laying out great sums 'in money and corn in order that the temple and all those who are in the land might be in safety; and having

22. gone to Lycopolis in the Busirite nome, which had been occupied and fortified against a siege with an abundant store of weapons and all other supplies (seeing that disaffection was now of long

23. standing among the impious men gathered into it, who had perpetrated much damage to the temples and to all the inhabitants of Egypt), and having

24. encamped against it, he surrounded it with mounds and trenches and elaborate fortifications; when the Nile made a great rise in the eighth year (of his reign), which usually floods the

25. plains, he prevented it, by damming at many points the outlets of the channels (spending upon this no small amount of money), and setting cavalry and infantry to guard

26. them, in a short time he took the town by storm and destroyed all the impious men in it, even as Hermes and Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris, formerly subdued the rebels in the same

27. district; and as to those who had led the rebels in the time of his father and who had disturbed the land and done wrong to the temples, he came to Memphis to avenge

28. his father and his own kingship, and punished them all as they deserved, at the time that he came there to perform the proper ceremonies for the assumption of the

crown; and whereas he remitted what

29. was due to the crown in the temples up to his eighth year, being no small amount of corn and money; so also the fines for the byssus

30. cloth not delivered to the crown, and of those delivered, the several fees for their verification, for the same period; and he also freed the temples of (the tax of) the artabe for every aroura of sacred land and likewise

31. the jar of wine for each aroura of vine land; and whereas he bestowed many gifts upon Apis and Mnevis and upon the other sacred animals in Egypt, because he was much more considerate than the kings before him of all that belonged to

32. the gods; and for their burials he gave what was suitable lavishly and splendidly, and what was regularly paid to their special shrines, with sacrifices and festivals and other customary observances;

33. and he maintained the honours of the temples and of Egypt according to the laws; and he adorned the temple of Apis with rich work, spending upon it gold and silver

34. and precious stones, no small amount; and whereas he has founded tmeples and shrines and altars, and has repaired those requiring it, having the spirit of a beneficent god in matters pertaining to

35. religion; and whereas after enquiry he has been renewing the most honourable of the temples during his reign, as is becoming; in requital of which things the gods have given him health, victory and power, and all other good things,

36. and he and his children shall retain the kingship for all time. WITH PROPITIOUS FORTUNE : It was resolved by the priests of all the temples in the land to increase greatly the existing honours of

37. King PTOLEMY, THE EVER-LIVING, THE BELOVED OF PTAH, THE GOD EPIPHANES EUCHARISTOS, likewise those of his parents the Gods Philopatores, and of his ancestors, the Gods Euergetai and

38. the Gods Adelphoi and the Gods Soteres and to set up in the most prominent place of every temple an image of the EVER-LIVING King PTOLEMY, THE BELOVED OF PTAH, THE GOD EPIPHANES EUCHARISTOS,

39. an image which shall be called that of "PTOLEMY, the defender of Egypt", beside which shall stand the principal god of the temple, handing him the weapon of victory, all of which shall be manufactured (in the Egyptian)

40. fashion; and that the priests shall pay homage to the images three times a day, and put upon them the sacred garments, and perform the other usual honours such as are given to the other gods in the Egyptian

41. festivals; and to establish for King PTOLEMY, THE GOD EPIPHANES EUCHARISTOS, sprung of King Ptolemy and Queen Arsinoe, the Gods Philopatores, a statue and golden shrine in each of the

42. temples, and to set it up in the inner chamber with the other shrines; and in the great festivals in which the shrines are carried in procession the shrine of the GOD

EPIPHANES EUCHARISTOS shall be carried in procession with them.

43. And in order that it may be easily disinguishable now and for all time, there shall be set upon the shrine the ten gold diadems of the king, to which shall be added a uraelis but instead of

44. the uraeus-shaped diadems which are upon the other shrines, in the centre of them shall be the crown called Pschent which he put on when he went into the temple at Memphis

45. to perform therein the ceremonies for assuming the kingship; and there shall be placed on the square surface round about the diadems, beside the aforementioned crown, golden symbols (eight in number signifying)

46. that it is (the shrine) of the king who makes manifest the Upper and the Lower countries. And since it is the 30^{th} of Mesore on which the birthday of the king is celebrated, and likewise (the 17^{th} of Paophi)

47. on which he succeeded his father in the kingship, they have held these days in honour as name-days in the temples, since they are sources of great blessings for all; it was further decreed that a festival shall be kept in the temples throughout Egypt

48. on these days in every month, on which there shall be sacrifices and libations and all the ceremonies customary at the other festivals (and the offerings shall be given to the priests who)

49. serve in the temples. And a festival shall be kept for King PTOLEMY, THE EVERLIVING, THE BELOVED OF

PTAH, THE GOD EPIPHANES EUCHARISTOS, yearly in the temples throughout the

50. land from the 1st of Thoth for five days, in which they shall wear garlands and perform sacrifices and libations and the other usual honours, and the priests (in each temple) shall be called

51. priests of the GOD EPIPHANES EUCHARISTOS in addition to the names of the other gods whom they serve; and his priesthood shall be entered upon all formal documents (and engraved upon the rings which they wear);

52. and private individuals shall also be allowed to keep the festival and set up the aforementioned shrine and have it in their homes,performing the aforementioned celebrations

53. yearly, in order that it may be known to all that the men of Egypt magnify and honour the GOD EPIPHANES EUCHARISTOS the king, according to the law.This decree shall be inscribed on a stela of

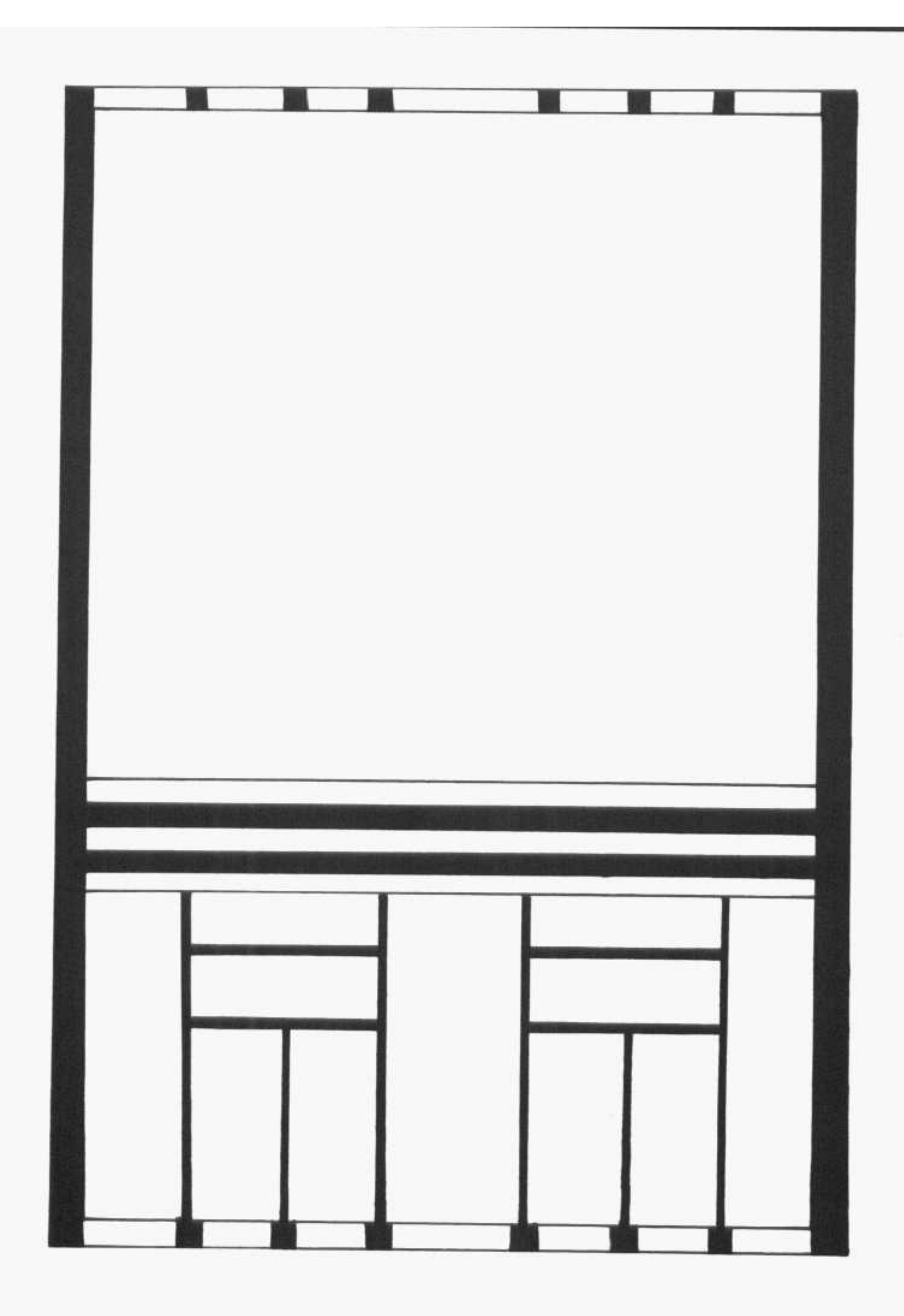
54. hard stone in sacred [that is hieroglyphic] and native [that is demoticl] and Greek characters and set up in each of the first, second and third [rank] temples beside the image of the ever-living king

Hieroglyphic Sign - List

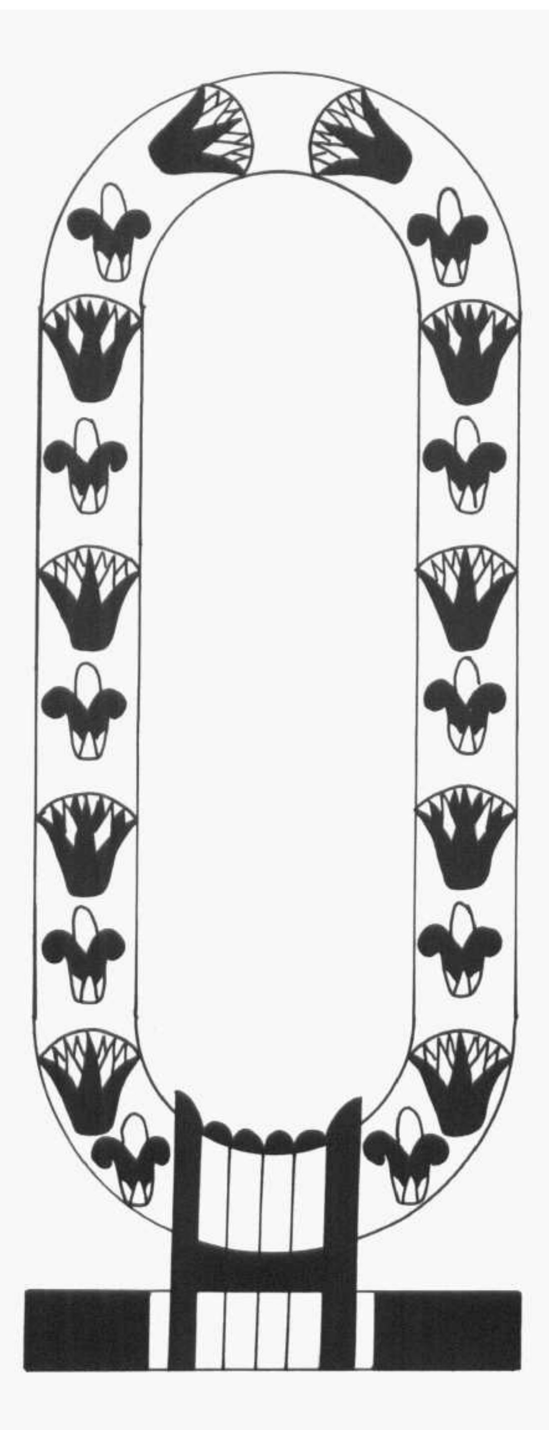



bull
head of ox
lizard
calf
horns of ox
cobra
horse
ear of ox
fish
ass
cow's skin
dung - beetle
ram
heart
fly
cat
tail
herb
greyhound
falcon
branch
lion
vulture
leaf
elephant
sparrow
thorn
monkey
wing
sky
hare
feather
sun


sunshine
coffin
pestle
ripples
apron
coil of rope
house
sandal
lasso
pyramid
crook
bowl
obelisk
axe
bread
stela
arrow
water-pots
door
knife
whip
wall
sickle
cup
sail
hoe
jar
mast
plough
papyrus roll
seat
chisel
scribe's outfit



During the early dynastic period the name of the king was written in a rectangular frame called a SEREKH.



From the old kingdom the name of the king was written in ovals called a CARTOUCHE.



Scribes writing on papyrus rolls
Horemheb tomb - Saqqara

Hieroglyphic

Demotic

ⲉϥ ϣⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲧⲱⲣⲡ̄ ⲙ̄
ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ ϭⲓϫ ⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲕ

Coptic

Hieratic